Amendments to the Specification

Please add the following new heading before paragraph [0002]:

BACKGROUND

Amend paragraph [0003] as follows:

[0003] ~~The~~ An object of the present invention is ~~therefore~~ to develop a method and a device of the type mentioned at the beginning in such a way that any desired number of input variables can be taken into account in order to determine the set point value of the distance variable without the possibility of an inappropriate set point value being produced for the distance variable.

Please delete paragraph [0004].

Please add the following new heading before paragraph [0005]:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Amend paragraph [0006] as follows:

[0006] The input variables which may be ~~are~~ used to describe the driving situation of the vehicle and/or the ambient situation of the vehicle and/or the driving behavior of the vehicle comprise, in particular, one or more of the following variables:

- the windshield wiper activity, the velocity and acceleration of the vehicle, the relative velocity and relative acceleration between the vehicle and vehicle traveling in front,

- the profile of the carriageway, the inclination of the carriageway, the condition of the carriageway, applicable speed limits, the weather conditions and light conditions in the surroundings of the vehicle, the external temperature,

- the driving ability of the driver, the type of driver and the activation of an accelerator pedal which is provided to permit the driver to influence the driving means.

Please delete paragraph [0007].

Amend paragraph [0010] as follows:

[0010] In order to prevent the averaged weighting values giving rise to excessively large or excessively small set point values for the distance variable, the combined value may be ~~is~~ restricted to a predefined value range. The value range is defined here by predefining an upper and lower limiting value for the combined value, the limiting values being predefined as a function of driving state variables which describe the driving state of the vehicle.

Please add the following new heading before paragraph [0014]:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Please add the following new heading before paragraph [0017]:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Please replace paragraph [0018] with the following amended paragraph:

[0018] For example, a first input variable x_i is a variable which describes an accelerator pedal deflection s, caused by the driver, of an accelerator pedal (not illustrated) which is provided to permit the driver to influence driving means of the vehicle. If a risk of a rear-end collision with a vehicle traveling in front suddenly occurs, the driver intuitively reacts by reducing the accelerator pedal deflection s with a view to increasing the distance from the vehicle traveling in front to a safe value. Conversely, if the accelerator pedal deflection s is increased the driver intuitively expects the distance from the vehicle traveling in front to be decreased. The first weighting value g_i is therefore ~~greater~~ smaller the larger the accelerator pedal deflection s caused by the driver, which comes about in the first substep 12a as a result of the use of a corresponding functional dependence between a first weighting value g_1 and the accelerator pedal deflection s. The functional dependence has in this respect in particular the illustrated step-shaped profile, in

which case of course any other profile which leads to the desired result is also conceivable instead of a step-shaped profile. In the preferred exemplary embodiment, the steps of the profile according to the first substep 12a each have a hysteresis.

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following amended paragraph:

[0021] Finally, a fourth input variable x_4 is a variable which describes the acceleration behavior of the vehicle traveling in front in relation to the driver's own vehicle, that is to say, for example, a relative acceleration variable which describes the relative acceleration or relative deceleration a_{rel} of the vehicle in relation to the vehicle traveling in front. The fourth weighting value g_4 becomes ~~larger or~~ smaller or larger here the higher the acceleration or deceleration of the vehicle traveling in front relative to the driver's own vehicle, which is taken into account in the fourth substep 12d by using a corresponding functional dependence between a fourth weighting value and relative acceleration or relative deceleration a_{rel}. The functional dependence has, in particular, the illustrated step-shaped profile, in which case of course any other profile is also possible instead of a step-shaped profile.

Please amend the heading on top of page 13 with the following amended heading:

~~Patent claims~~ WHAT IS CLAIMED IS: